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ABSTRACT

In order to achieve significant results, crucial criteria for stabilizing a network's capacity for dialog are high levels of commitment to offer high quality knowledge, two-way translation from research knowledge to practitioners and from practice to researchers, a maximum size, face-to-face communication, infrastructure, and funds for long-distance communication. The Literacy Exchange Network established at the Unesco Institute for Education with the support of Unesco Headquarters is structured in a noncompetitive, decentralized manner. It relies on existing or planned resource centers and networks in attempting to channel the international information flow among all individuals and organizations from grassroots to research and policy making concerned with any aspect of adult literacy. The network's knowledge pool has three components: collection of publications, database containing network members' profiles, and network members' expertise. Approximately 1,000 institutions/individuals/networks have been approached so far. The geographical distribution of countries approached goes beyond Europe to include all industrialized countries. To date, some 650 institutions/networks/individuals from 31 countries have joined the network. (The publication includes instruments developed for data collection.) (YLB)

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The Unesco/UIE Literacy Network: A Network of Networks

Text of a presentation made at the NGO Consultation Meeting Hamburg 1990

by
Ursula Giere
Unesco/UIE Literacy Network Coordinator

Literacy networks for sharing information, experiences and expertise are mushrooming. While some people believe in informal networks growing around personal contacts with colleagues, others prefer more institutionalised networks. Discussions about what features make networks most interactive, most efficient and most potential to help bridging the gap between theory and practice, research and decision making have led to controversial viewpoints, competition and sometimes even rivalry.

There seems to be some common understanding that networks crystallize and emerge easily around a shared concern for a particular specialization aspect, be it the profession practiced, a particular content area, an ideological approach, a geographical region or perhaps around a common language.

What, however, prevents active, dynamic networks from submerging under files, ending up as address lists of passive recipients of some insignificant information being disseminated with increasing irregularity? A straightforward overall valid answer certainly does not exist.

A work group on networks established during the International Conference on World Literacy in the Year 2000 organized this October by the Literacy Research Center, University of Pennsylvania as a follow-up of the World Conference on Education for All (WCEFA), Jomtien, for example, considered the following criteria crucial for stabilizing a network's capacity for dialogue: high levels of commitment to offer high quality knowledge; two-way translation from research knowledge to practitioners and from practice to researchers; a maximum size of 200 network members; some face to face communication; infrastructure and funds for long distance communication.

The World Declaration on Education for All and Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs adopted by the World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien in March 1990, while stressing the need for exchange of information, experience and expertise and for undertaking joint activities, does not highlight specific networking principles but recommends the utilization of existing mechanisms for information sharing such as the

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> "... *numerous conferences and meetings organized by non-governmental bodies ...*"[1]

The following six areas where a form of regional collaboration seems particularly appropriate are explicitely mentioned:

> "... *(i) training of key personnel, such as planners managers, teacher educators, researchers, etc; (ii) efforts to improve information collection and analysis; (iii) research; (iv) production of educational materials; (v) use of communication media to meet basic learning needs; and (vi) management and use of distance education services. Here, too,*"

the Framework for Action suggests

> "... *several existing mechanisms that could be utilized to foster such activities, including ... the Unesco Institute for Education*".[2]

The Literacy Exchange Network established at the Unesco Institute for Education with the support of Unesco Headquarters in 1988 for industrialized countries and from 1991 also for developing countries does not pretend nor aim at being the one and only Network/Resource Centre in Adult Literacy and Basic Education. It is, on the contrary, structured in a non-competitive, decentralized manner relying on resource persons as well as on existing or planned resource centres and networks, thus attempting to actively channel the international information flow among all individuals and organizations - governmental, non-governmental and intergovernmental - from grassroots to research and policy-making concerned with any aspect of adult literacy.

While the Literacy Network for developing countries is still in a preparatory phase the Literacy Network for industrialized countries, following a recommendation of the 1986 Unesco Pan-European Literacy Workshop, has been established and will continue to

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1 World Declaration on Education for All and Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs. Adopted by the World Conference on Education for All. Jomtien, Thailand 5-9 March 1990. New York: WCEFA April 1990. p. 14.

2 ibid.

- provide information on request
- organize workshops and round-tables
- help avoid duplication of work
- develop links between research and practice, between networks
- stimulate action and research, such as for example trend analyses, and
- disseminate information through publication of for example directories and bibliographies.

The following graph (p. 4) shows various member groups of UIE's network - many of which include NGOs, such as mass media, voluntary organizations, learning groups, literacy workers, authors, other literacy networks - and lists some of the network's functions, the co-operative research strand and the information exchange activities:

One of the instruments for information exchange not explicitely mentioned in the graph is the newsletter

Adult Education Information Notes

published by Unesco Headquarters and distributed free of charge to all network members.

The Network's knowledge pool has the following components:

- collection of publications
- database containing network members' profiles
- network members' expertise.

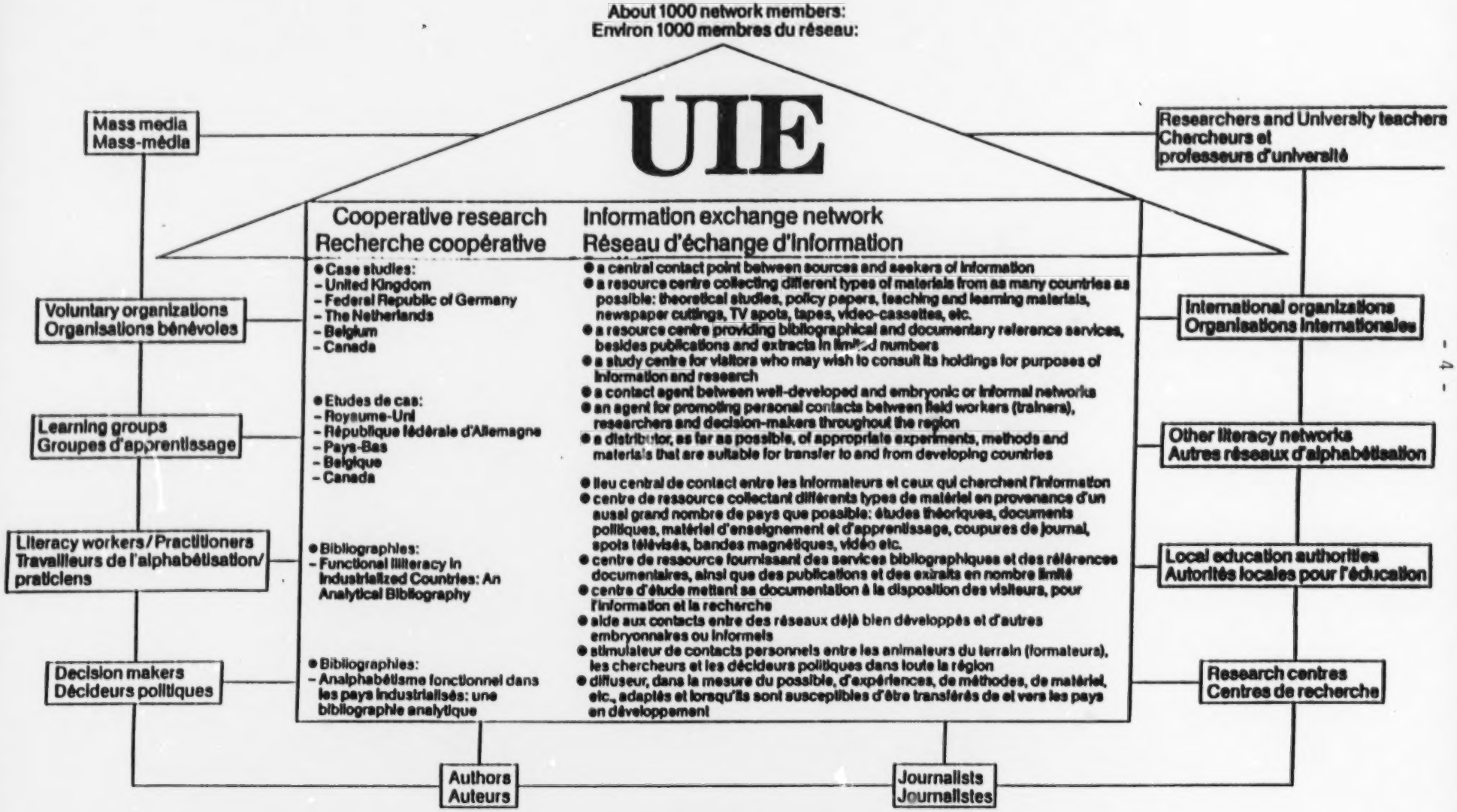
One instrument for data collection is the following questionnaire (p. 5), asking for personal data (more individual than institution oriented, thus not possible to say definitely how many responses were received from NGOs), nature of work, field of specialization, etc.

This original questionnaire is changing with the dynamic flux of the literacy field, some of the additions to be implemented after analysing the responses to the questions "other" under 5. *Nature of Work* and 6. *Field of Specialization* shall be pointed out here (please see p. 6 and p. 7, additions and changes handwritten).

Around 1000 institutions/individuals/networks have been approached so far, for decentralization purposes between 3-10 per country to join as resource members, depending on the amount of a country's activities and the nature of their expertise.

The geographical distribution of countries approached goes beyond Europe, attempting to include all industrialized countries also such as Australia, Japan, New Zealand (chart p. 8).

THE LITERACY EXCHANGE NETWORK


About 1000 network members:
Environ 1000 membres du réseau:
UIE
Mass media
Mass-média
Researchers and University teachers
Chercheurs et professeurs d'université
Cooperative research
Recherche coopérative
Information exchange network
Réseau d'échange d'information
Voluntary organizations
Organisations bénévoles
Learning groups
Groupes d'apprentissage
Literacy workers / Practitioners
Travailleurs de l'alphabétisation/ praticiens
Decision makers
Décideurs politiques
International organizations
Organisations internationales
Other literacy networks
Autres réseaux d'alphabétisation
Local education authorities
Autorités locales pour l'éducation
Research centres
Centres de recherche
Authors
Auteurs
Journalists
Journalistes
● Case studies:
- United Kingdom
- Federal Republic of Germany
- The Netherlands
- Belgium
- Canada
● Etudes de cas:
- Royaume-Uni
- République fédérale d'Allemagne
- Pays-Bas
- Belgique
- Canada
● Bibliographies:
- Functional Illiteracy in Industrialized Countries: An Analytical Bibliography
● Bibliographies:
- Analphabétisme fonctionnel dans les pays industrialisés: une bibliographie analytique
● a central contact point between sources and seekers of information
● a resource centre collecting different types of materials from as many countries as possible: theoretical studies, policy papers, teaching and learning materials, newspaper cuttings, TV spots, tapes, video-cassettes, etc.
● a resource centre providing bibliographical and documentary reference services, besides publications and extracts in limited numbers
● a study centre for visitors who may wish to consult its holdings for purposes of information and research
● a contact agent between well-developed and embryonic or informal networks
● an agent for promoting personal contacts between field workers (trainers), researchers and decision-makers throughout the region
● a distributor, as far as possible, of appropriate experiments, methods and materials that are suitable for transfer to and from developing countries
● lieu central de contact entre les informateurs et ceux qui cherchent l'information
● centre de ressource collectant différents types de matériel en provenance d'un aussi grand nombre de pays que possible: études théoriques, documents politiques, matériel d'enseignement et d'apprentissage, coupures de journal, spots télévisés, bandes magnétiques, vidéo etc.
● centre de ressource fournissant des services bibliographiques et des références documentaires, ainsi que des publications et des extraits en nombre limité
● centre d'étude mettant sa documentation à la disposition des visiteurs, pour l'information et la recherche
● aide aux contacts entre des réseaux déjà bien développés et d'autres embryonnaires ou informels
● stimulateur de contacts personnels entre les animateurs du terrain (formateurs), les chercheurs et les décideurs politiques dans toute la région
● diffuseur, dans la mesure du possible, d'expériences, de méthodes, de matériel, etc., adaptés et lorsqu'ils sont susceptibles d'être transférés de et vers les pays en développement

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Documentation Centre
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2000 Hamburg 13
Federal Republic of Germany

FUNCTIONAL LITERACY NETWORK QUESTIONNAIRE

Code: PRG 94.45
March 1989

1. NAME:

2. ADDRESS:

3. TELEPHONE:
   TELEX:

4. WORKING LANGUAGE(S):

... 4.01 English
... 4.02 French
... 4.03 German
... 4.04 Spanish
... 4.05 Others (specify):
.....

5. NATURE OF WORK:

... 5.01 Researcher
... 5.02 Literacy tutor/teacher/animator
... 5.03 Administrator/Manager
... 5.04 Media specialist
... 5.05 Other (specify):
.....

6. FIELD OF SPECIALIZATION:
   (Please tick one or more)

... 6.01 Conceptual and historical aspects
... 6.02 Promotion of reading
... 6.03 Issues related to writing
... 6.04 Preparation of personnel
... 6.05 Conception and production of learning/teaching/motivational material
... 6.06 Public information and awareness raising
... 6.07 Use of media/computers
... 6.08 Literacy and employment
... 6.09 Literacy and schooling
... 6.10 Literacy and orality
... 6.11 Gender related studies
... 6.12 Dyslexia
... 6.13 Minorities/migrants
... 6.14 Instructional methods
... 6.15 Statistics
... 6.16 Documentation
... 6.17 Others (please specify):
.....

7. COUNTRY/IES to which your work is related:

8. Your most relevant PUBLICATIONS:

9. Information about your ongoing or recently completed RESEARCH projects:
   (Please attach separate sheet)

10. Information about meetings etc. related to DEVELOPMENTAL ACTIVITIES:
    (Please attach separate sheet)

11. Please suggest PERSONS who should be included in the network
    (Also give address, if possible):

To allow us to process and store these data through the services of a computer, we need your explicit agreement. For this purpose, please sign the following statement:

I have been informed that the data obtained from this Questionnaire will be computerized and I hereby give my permission for this to be done it being understood that these data will be used for network purposes only.

.....
Signature and date

FUNCTIONAL LITERACY NETWORK
QUESTIONNAIRE

Code: PRG 94.45

1. NAME:

2. ADDRESS:

3. TELEPHONE:
   TELEX:

4. WORKING LANGUAGE(S):

... 4.01 English
... 4.02 French
... 4.03 German
... 4.04 Spanish
... 4.05 Others (specify):
.....

5. NATURE OF WORK:

... 5.01 Researcher/author
... 5.02 Literacy tutor/teacher/animator
... 5.03 Administrator/Manager/project co-ordinator
... 5.04 Media specialist/learning materials producer
... 5.05 University teacher / teacher trainer
... 5.06 Documentalist / information specialist / Librarian
... 5.07 Psychologist / counselor
... 5.08 Other (specify):

Code: PRG 94.45

FUNCTIONAL LITERACY NETWORK QUESTIONNAIRE

6. FIELD OF SPECIALIZATION:
(Please tick one or more)

... 6.01 Conceptual and historical aspects
... 6.02 Promotion of reading
... 6.03 Issues related to writing
... 6.04 Preparation of personnel/volunteers
... 6.05 Conception and production of learning/teaching/motivational material
... 6.06 Public information and awareness raising
... 6.07 Use of media/computers
... 6.08 Literacy and employment
... 6.09 Literacy and schooling
... 6.10 Literacy and orality / language issues
... 6.11 Gender related studies
... 6.12 Dyslexia
... 6.13 Minorities/migrants /multiculturalism
... 6.14 Instructional methods
... 6.15 Statistics
... 6.16 Documentation
... 6.17 family literacy / intergenerational effects
... 6.18 literacy and correctional services
... 6.19 networking
... 6.20 literacy and libraries
... 6.21 evaluation
... 6.22 handicapped persons
... 6.23 community development / popular education
... 6.24 funding / finance
... 6.25 numeracy
... 6.26 recruitment / placement
... 6.27 guidance / counselling
... 6.28 governmental policy
... 6.29 program management
... 6.30 others (specify) :

7. COUNTRY/IES to which your work is related:

8. Your most relevant PUBLICATIONS:

9. Information about your ongoing or recently completed RESEARCH projects:
(Please attach separate sheet)

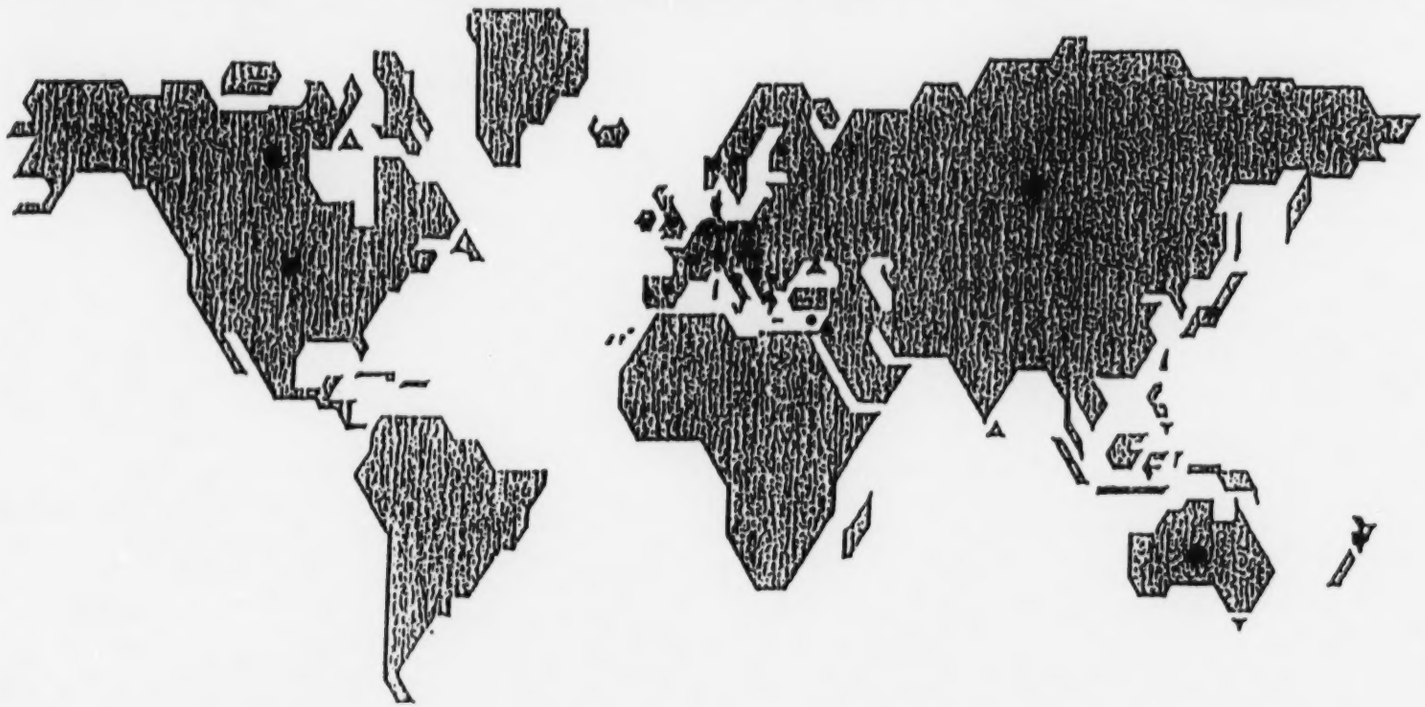
10. Information about meetings etc. related to DEVELOPMENTAL ACTIVITIES:
(Please attach separate sheet)

11. Please suggest PERSONS who should be included in the network
(Also give address, if possible):

FUNCTIONAL LITERACY NETWORK

The geographical scope:

Australia	Cyprus	FRG	Israel	New Zealand	Sweden	Yugoslavia
Austria	Czechoslovakia	GDR	Italy	Norway	Switzerland	
Belgium	Denmark	Greece	Japan	Poland	United Kingdom	and
Bulgaria	Finland	Hungary	Luxembourg	Portugal	USA	International
Canada	France	Ireland	Netherlands	Spain	USSR	Organizations



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To date, some 650 institutions/networks/individuals from 31 countries have joined the Network. The distribution of members per countries is very unequal, almost 70% of the responses received are covered by four countries, USA, Canada, former FRG, UK or 45% by two countries, namely USA and Canada. This certainly reflects to some extent the different levels of acceptance/awareness of the literacy situation increasing only recently in Eastern European countries and Scandinavia (chart p. 10).

While the collection of data goes continuously on, the number of members enlarges, the content as well as the geographical scope broadens, the following publications have been produced for distribution to/stimulation of discussion among network members.:

Functional illiteracy in industrialized countries: An analytical bibliography. 1987.

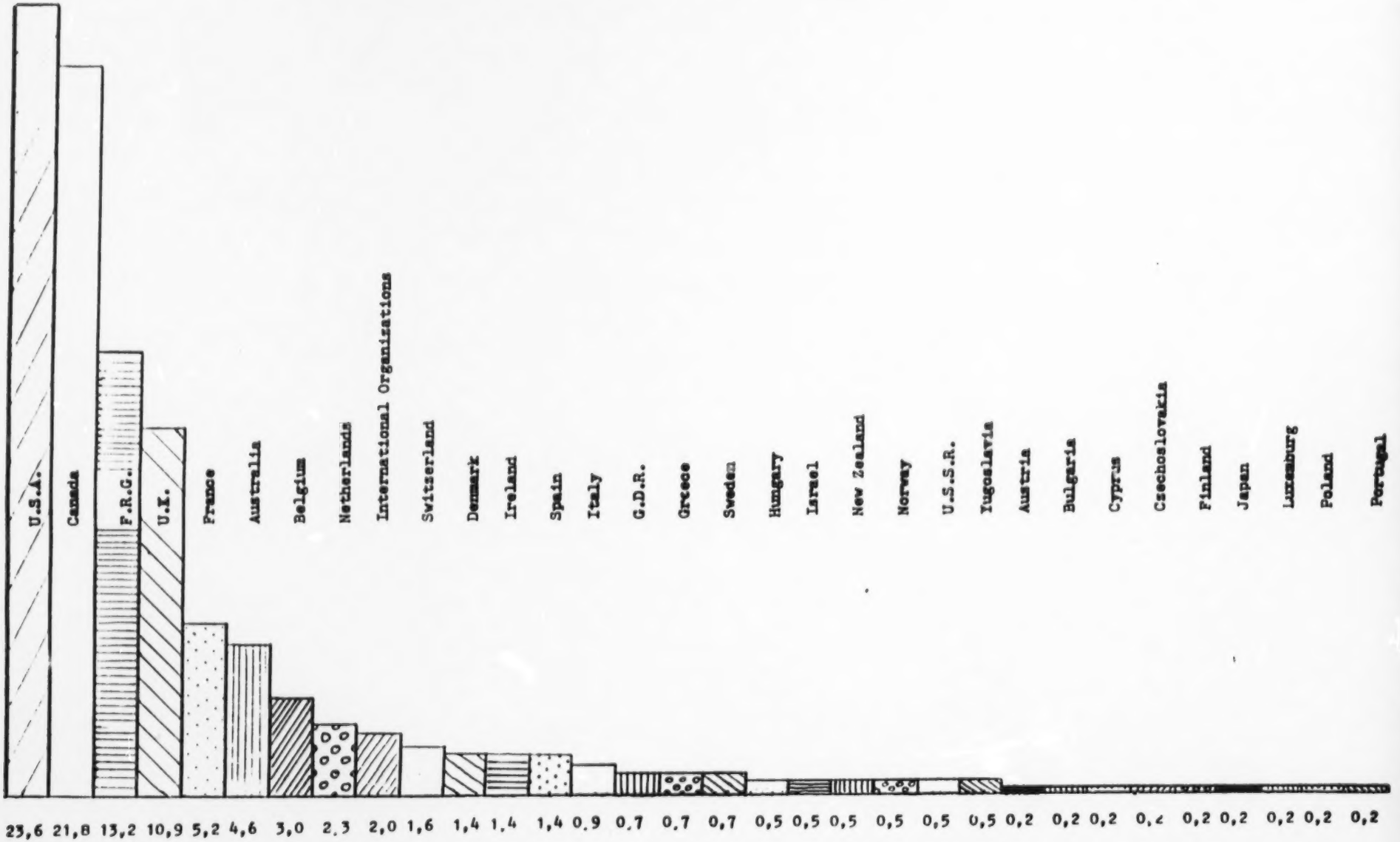
A selective bibliography on literacy in industrialized countries. 1990.

Researching literacy in industrialized countries: trends and prospects. 1990.

As mentioned before, the Literacy Network for Developing Countries is still in a preparatory phase. The instruments developed for collection of data take experiences made with the questionnaire for industrialized countries into account (for example, they have a category on type of organization), reflect, however, also some differences in literacy work and research between industrialized and developing countries (English version of questionnaire p. 11, French version, p. 12).

FUNCTIONAL LITERACY NETWORK

Responses from individual countries (percentage):



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W-2000 Hamburg 13
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LITERACY NETWORK QUESTIONNAIRE

PRG 94.55(B)
September 1990

1. Name:
1a. Designation:
2. Office Address
   Telephone:
   Telex: Telefax:
2a. Type of organisation
... 2a.01 Non-governmental organisation
... 2a.02 Governmental organisation
... 2a.03 Regional/international organisation
... 2a.04 Others (specify):
.....

3. Home Address:
   Telephone:
   Telex: Telefax:

4. Working language(s):
... 4.01 English
... 4.02 French
... 4.03 German
... 4.04 Spanish
... 4.05 Others (specify):
.....

5. Nature of Work
... 5.01 Researcher
... 5.02 Literacy tutor/teacher/animator
... 5.03 Administrator/Manager
... 5.04 Media specialist
... 5.05 Consultant
... 5.06 Supervisor/trainer
... 5.07 Evaluator
... 5.08 Planner
... 5.09 Other (specify):

6. Field of Specialization:
   (please tick one or more)
...6.01 Conceptual and historical aspects
...6.02 Creating a literating environment
...6.03 Adult learners, characteristics, life histories
...6.04 Preparation of personnel
...6.05 Conception and production of learning/teaching/motivational material
...6.06 Public information and awareness raising
...6.07 Use of media/computers
...6.08 Literacy and productive work
...6.09 Literacy and schooling
...6.10 Literacy, orality and "visuality"
...6.11 Gender/women related studies
...6.12 Language issues
...6.13 Minorities/migrants/refugees
...6.14 Instructional/learning methods
...6.15 Statistics
...6.16 Documentation
...6.17 Drop-out
...6.18 Evaluation: programme evaluation, learner evaluation, impact evaluation
...6.19 Intergenerational effects
...6.20 Out-of-school children
...6.21 Basic education
...6.22 Extension work
...6.23 Popular education
...6.24 Specificity of adult learning
...6.25 Inter- or peer-learning
...6.26 Comparative analysis North-South
...6.27 Rural development
...6.28 Health education
...6.29 Post-literacy
...6.30 Others (specify):
.....

7. COUNTRY/IES to which your work is related:

8. Your most recent work/ publication:

9. Information about your ongoing or recently completed RESEARCH projects: (Please attach separate sheet)

10. Information about meetings etc. related to development of your literacy activities: (Please attach separate sheet)

11. Please suggest PERSONS and/or ORGANISATIONS who should be included in the network: (Also give address, if possible)

To allow us to process and store these data through the services of a computer, we need your explicit agreement. For this purpose, please sign the following statement:

I have been informed that the data obtained from this Questionnaire will be computerized and I hereby give my permission for this to be done, it being understood that these data will be used for network purposes only.

15

.....
Date and Signature

19

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République Fédérale d'Allemagne

PRG 94.55(B)

QUESTIONNAIRE SUR LE RESEAU D'ALPHABETISATION

1. Nom:
1a. Fonction actuelle:
2. Adresse (bureau):
   Téléphone:
   Télex: Téléfax:
2a. Type d'organisation:
... 2a.01 Organisation non-gouvernementale
... 2a.02 Organisation gouvernementale
... 2a.03 Organisation régionale/internationale
... 2a.04 Autres (à spécifier):
.....
3. Adresse (domicile):
   Téléphone:
   Télex: Téléfax:

4. Langues de travail:
   4.01 Anglais
   4.02 Français
   4.03 Allemand
   4.04 Espagnol
   4.05 Autres (à spécifier):
.....
5. Nature de la fonction
   5.01 Chercheur
   5.02 Instructeur d'alphabétisation enseignants/animateur
   5.03 Administrateur/gestionnaire
   5.04 Spécialiste de médias
   5.05 Consultant
   5.06 Superviseur/Formateur
   5.07 Evaluateur
   5.08 Planificateur
   5.09 Autres (à spécifier)

Afin de nous permettre d'utiliser vos données sur ordinateur il nous faut votre accord explicite. A ce propos, veuillez signer la déclaration ci-jointe:
J'ai été informé que les données obtenues par ce questionnaire seront enregistrées et je l'accepte à condition que ces informations ne soient utilisées que dans le cadre du réseau d'alphabétisation.

.....
Date et signature

6. Domaine de spécialisation:
(cocher un ou plusieurs items)
... 6.01 Aspects conceptuels et historiques
... 6.02 Création d'environnements lettrés
... 6.03 Aprenants adultes, caractéristiques, histoires de vie/bibliographiques
... 6.04 Formation du personnel
... 6.05 Conception, production de matériel (d'apprentissage, d'enseignement, de motivation)
... 6.06 Information et sensibilisation du public
... 6.07 Utilisation des médias/ordinateurs
... 6.08 Alphabétisation et milieu du travail
... 6.09 Alphabétisation et école
... 6.10 Alphabétisation, oralité et "visualité"
... 6.11 Etudes sur la condition des femmes
... 6.12 Questions linguistiques
... 6.13 Minorités/migrants/réfugiés
... 6.14 Méthodes d'instruction/d'apprentissage
... 6.15 Statistiques
... 6.16 Documentation
... 6.17 Abandons et déperdition
... 6.18 Evaluation des programmes/des acquis/des conséquences/impact de l'alphabétisation
... 6.19 Questions intergénérationelles
... 6.20 Enfants non scolarisés
... 6.21 Education de base
... 6.22 Travail de vulgarisation
... 6.23 Education populaire
... 6.24 L'apprentissage spécifique des adultes
... 6.25 Inter-apprentissage ou apprentissage en groupe
... 6.26 Analyses comparatives Nord/Sud
... 6.27 Développement rural
... 6.28 Education relative à la santé
... 6.29 Post-alphabétisation
... 6.30 Autres (à spécifier):
.....

7. Pays auquels votre travail se réfère:

8. Votre publication la plus récente:

9. Information sur votre recherche récemment accomplie (Veuillez attacher une fiche séparée)

10. Information sur conférences liées à vos activités en matière d'alphabétisation (Veuillez attacher une fiche séparée)

11. Veuillez proposer d'autres personnes ou organisations qui devraient être inclues dans le réseau (Veuillez également ajouter leurs adresses)

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